Congratulations for your interest in being a Conservation District Supervisor. We'd like to welcome you to the first of many training modules developed by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Conservation Districts Bureau (CDB). Our goal is to provide basic training modules that can be viewed at board meetings, specific meetings, or at your home.

New Supervisor Training

Modules

- History of Conservation District's
- Basic Operations of Conservation District's
- What CD's Do
- District Authority
- Supervisor Roles

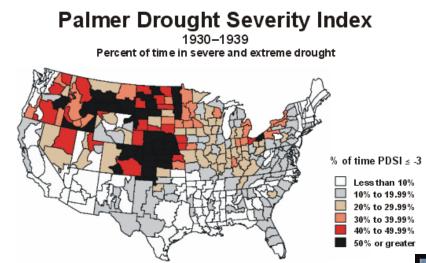
This CD Training module is on the History of Conservation Districts

In this Module, you'll learn a little more on the history of Conservation Districts, and the chain of events that lead up to creation of CD's nation wide and in Montana. You'll also learn the basic layout of a Conservation District.

History of Conservation Districts

- Early 1930s, the Dust Bowl.
- Severe and sustained drought, soil began to erode and blow away
- Huge black dust storms blotted out the sun and swallowed the countryside.
- Thousands of "dust refugees" left the black fog to seek better lives.

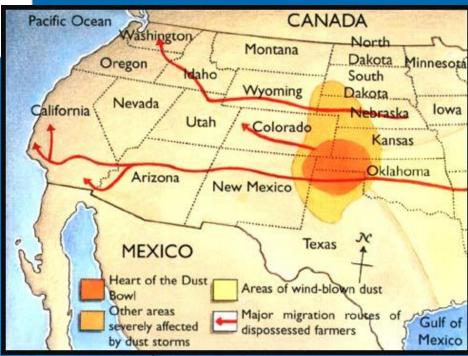




Montana was also in a severe drought during the dust bowl days (1930's).

SOURCE: McK ee et al. (1993); NOAA (1990); High Plains Regional Climate Center (1996) Albers Equal Area Projection; Map prepared at the National Drought Mitigation Center

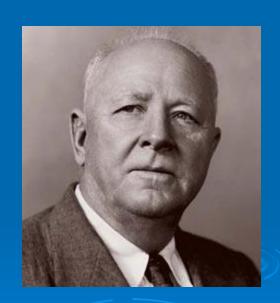
Many farmers moved west during this time frame we know as the great depression.



History of CD's

- Storms stretched across the nation .. south to Texas and east to New York.
- Dust sifted into the White House and on the desk of President Roosevelt.
- In 1934, the term "dust bowl" was born.

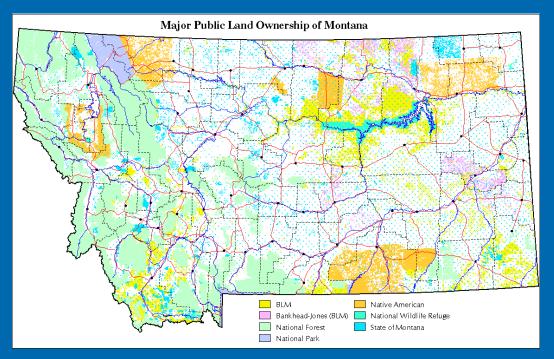
Hugh Hammond Bennett,
the "Father of Soil Conservation".



On May 12, 1934, a major storm hit the plains, later to be described by Bennett as a turning point in the battle to get public attention to the erosion problem:

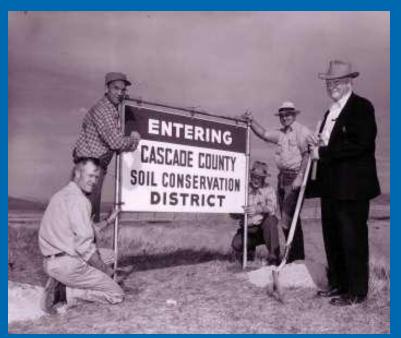


Congress unanimously passed
 Soil Conservation Act of April 27, 1935.



- Three-fourths of the continental United States is privately owned, and 59% in Montana.
- Congress realized that only active, voluntary support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation work on private land.
- 1937, President Roosevelt wrote the governors of all the states recommending legislation that would allow local landowners to form soil conservation districts.

CD's become reality in Montana





Caught on across the country with district-enabling legislation passed in every state.

- Montana passed the Montana Conservation District Law (Section 76-15-101, MCA) in 1939.
- Wibaux CD & Sheridan CD were the first CD's formed in Montana on Jan 15, 1940.
- Today, there are 58 conservation districts in MT.

History of CD's in review:

- 1. What major event lead to the creation of CD's?
- 2. What act did Congress pass in 1935 addressing soil and water conservation?
- 3. How % private land in your county? ?%
- 4. What year was the Montana Conservation District Law passed?
- 5. Today there are how many CD's in Montana?